

Zion National Park Historic Trail System,
East Rim Trail
Zion National Park
Springdale vicinity
Washington County
Utah

HAER No. UT-40-C

HAER

UTAH,

27-SPDA. V

IC-

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Engineering Record
Rocky Mountain Regional Office
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
P.O. Box 25287
Denver, Colorado 80225

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

Zion National Park Historic Trails System, East Rim Trail

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Location: Zion National Park
Springdale vicinity, Washington County, Utah

Date of Construction: 1896; Alterations - 1918, 1919, 1921, 1954, 1966

Present Owner: National Park Service
U. S. Department of the Interior

Present Use: Horseback/hiking trail

Significance: The lower two miles of the East Rim Trail was
associated with the Draw Works lumbering activity.

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Starting at the Weeping Rock parking area and ending at Observation Point, the East Rim Trail is four miles long and climbs 2,100 feet. The original trail-route was used by prehistoric peoples and was improved by pioneer rancher John Winder in 1896. David Flanigan utilized the lower two miles of this route (before the Cable Mt. Trail turnoff), when he built the cableworks to lower lumber into Zion Canyon from Cable Mountain in 1901. As the weak link in the short-cut route between Orderville and St. George by way of Zion Canyon, the trail was barely passable when Mukuntuweap (Zion) Canyon was established as a national monument in 1909.

National Park Service crews worked to improve the trail in the winter of 1918 (the year the name of the area was changed to Zion National Monument) and in the spring of 1919 (the year the area was designated as Zion National Park). Thus, the trail was one of the first to be improved in the park. With the completion of the West Rim Trail in 1935, however, the East Rim Trail became overshadowed by its cross-canyon rival. Heavily damaged by torrential rains in July 1954, it was not repaired despite the availability of regional emergency reconstruction funds. Zion National Park personnel determined it, "would be wiser to do a good job on the West Rim Trail than to spread the money too thin and do only a temporary job on both routes." It was not until 1966 that the trail was repaved, retaining walls reconstructed, and drainage repairs accomplished.

In its four-mile course, the trail climbs steadily up the slope to Echo Canyon, on to the east rim of the plateau and to Observation Point situated on the Temple Cap Formation. Cut into Navaho Sandstone Cliffs, for the most part, portions of the trail, which provides access to a number of other east rim plateau trails, contain representative examples of random rubble rock work.

Bibliography

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